

SPRING 2005

Chisago Soil & Water Conservation District

DALE BERGFALK CHOSEN AS LOCAL CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

The Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District is pleased to announce that Dale Bergfalk, of Rushseba Township, is the 2004 Outstanding Conservationist for Chisago County.

Dale was recognized for his years of commitment towards conserving soil and water by utilizing several conservation practices on his farm in northern Chisago County. Conservation practices implemented include: no till and ridge till planting on all his corn and soybeans, properly installed field windbreaks and riparian buffers and a well managed rotational grazing plan to maximize forage for his beef herd.

Dale is also a former District supervisor;



he served on the District Board of Supervisors from 1978 through 1990. During his tenure he served on numerous local committees and held the positions of District Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer.

Dale was honored as the Outstanding Conservationist for Chisago County at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation

Districts' (MASWCD) annual convention in Duluth, Minnesota on December 7, 2004. We would like to thank and congratulate Dale for all of his hard work and recognize him for his strong conservation ethic.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|--|---|
| Landscaping with Trees & Shrubs | 2 |
| Ag BMP Loans | 2 |
| Web Site Updated | 2 |
| New District Conservationist | 3 |
| EQIP | 3 |
| Preventing Oak Wilt | 3 |
| Educational Opportunities | 4 |
| 2005 Spring Tree & Shrub Order Form – See Insert | |

COOPERATORS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE



Patience has its rewards. A year after he approached the Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District for help with an erosion project, Dan Carlson recently completed about 2000 feet of grassed waterway in Chisago Lakes Township. Dan approached the Chisago SWCD in 2003 asking for assistance to correct a gully in his farm field. Funding for the project came from the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program. The effort paid off; the waterways (pictured above) were finished in early September.

Another cooperator who is making a difference is Delano Olson of Sunrise

Township. This 850 foot farmstead shelterbelt (pictured below) along with over 3000 feet of field windbreaks was recently established on Delano's farm. The shelterbelt and windbreaks will greatly reduce soil erosion from the blowing winds, provide excellent wildlife habitat corridors, and protect his homestead from the cold winter winds. This project was funded through the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program.

It is the collective efforts of landowners like this that make Chisago County a great place to live.



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Craig Mold-District #1
(Fish Lake, Nessel and Rushseba)
Roland Cleveland-District #2
(North Branch, Harris and Lent)
Mary Ann Jay-District #3
(Amador and Sunrise)
Joan Barnes-District #4
(Chisago Lake and Wyoming)
Joseph Eichten-District #5
(Franconia and Shafer)
DISTRICT STAFF
Craig Mell - District Admin.
Susan Humble – Admin. Asst.
Jason Rehn – District Technician
(651)674-2333

Assisted by the
USDA NRCS
Tim Byrns – Dist. Conservationist
Julie Lindner – Soil Con. Tech.
(651)674-7160 ext. 3

Board meetings held on second Tuesday of each month at the North Branch AG Service Center.

www.chisagoswcd.org

LANDSCAPING WITH TREES AND SHRUBS FOR WILDLIFE

The Chisago SWCD provides a wide variety of shrubs and small trees that can be very beneficial for wildlife. Every wildlife species has its own unique requirements for both food and shelter. By planting several varieties of fruit bearing shrubs and trees a landowner may greatly diversify the amount of wildlife near their home.

Planning is a very important part of any planting. Think about your site thoroughly, planning for the soil type, moisture, space and light requirements, will all help to make your planting a successful one. Take into consideration the time of year that each tree and shrub produces their fruits and berries. Balance is the key. Plan out what time of the year each tree or shrub will produce edible berries for the wildlife in your area.

Fruits that can be consumed by wildlife in the summer are especially important to nesting birds by providing a good early food source for their young as well as providing nesting cover. Some examples would include Chokecherry, Nanking Cherry, and American Plum. Wildlife foods in the fall are also extremely important, they provide migratory birds the food they need to build up a fat reserve prior to migration. Some species that would bear fruit in the fall would be Redosier Dogwood and Silky Dogwood. Winter foods are probably the most important types of plants you can provide for your wildlife. The fruit from the Red Splendor Crabapple and the Red Cedar are usually bitter until they freeze and thaw making them readily available in the

winter months.

Take into consideration that wildlife also need cover from predators and from the weather, and plant tree species that will offer good nesting both close to and off of the ground. Planting evergreens and taller deciduous trees will offer a balance to your backyard that will be enjoyed by all.

Planting takes place in the spring, but winter is a key time to start planning and preparing for the upcoming season. The Chisago SWCD is available to help landowners choose the best species for their site. If you have further questions, please feel free to call the Chisago SWCD office in North Branch at 651/674-2333. The Spring 2005 Tree & Shrub order form is available in this newsletter, by contacting our office, or from the districts' web page at

www.chisagoswcd.org. Through the web site, you will also be able to look at pictures and determine the species that will work best in your yard.

The District also has some Nature books available for sale. The books: Woodworking for Wildlife, Wild About Birds, Landscaping for Wildlife, and Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality can be purchased at the SWCD Office in North Branch, stop in and take a look at them.



AGRICULTURAL BMP LOANS AVAILABLE

State revolving fund low interest loans are available through the Chisago County SWCD.



The loans provide low interest financing to rural landowners, farmers and agriculture supply businesses. These loans can be used with state and federal cost share funding.

Loans are available with a maximum of \$50,000 per participant, and a maximum loan length of 10 years, depending on the project. The state revolving fund low interest loan has a 3% interest rate plus a one time 1% origination fee.

Several practices are eligible for these

low interest loans: feedlot improvements to prevent runoff, upgrading manure storage basins to improve manure handling and spreading, terraces, waterways, streambank protection, sedimentation basins, wind breaks and other practices that prevent erosion, and the repair of individual sewage treatment systems.

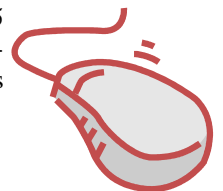
Interested landowners are encouraged to contact the Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District office at 651/674-2333 for more information. General information about the Chisago SWCD is also available by visiting our web site at: www.chisagoswcd.org

WEB SITE UPDATE COMPLETED

This past winter brought many changes to the District's web page. A complete update has taken place, allowing landowners in Chisago County many new opportunities when they visit the site.

Some of those opportunities include: pictures of new and ongoing projects, a printable Spring 2005 Tree & Shrub order form as well as links to photos and specific information on each species, general information on the history of Chisago SWCD and the programs offered through the District, as well as links to other helpful information for those living and working in and around Chisago County.

Log on to www.chisagoswcd.org today and check it out.



WELCOME TIM BYRNS

The Chisago SWCD is happy to welcome Tim Byrns to Chisago County. He is the new District Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Tim replaces long time Chisago County District Conservationist Michelle Wohlers, who in June moved south to Dakota County. Tim came here from St. Louis County, where he served as a Soil Conservationist. He is here to provide Federal Farm Program assistance to the constituents of Chisago County.

Tim is a graduate of University of Wisconsin at Superior with a degree in Biology and a minor in Environ-

mental Science. He enjoys working with landowners to assist them with their natural resource concerns. Tim enjoys spending his free time wood carving, snowboarding, cross country skiing and hiking with his wife and their two dogs. Tim can be reached at 651/674-7160 ext 101 or by e-mail at tim.byrns@mn.usda.gov.



WHAT'S EQIP?

NRCS ANNOUNCES 21 MILLION FOR CONSERVATION COST-SHARE PROGRAM

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has announced that 21 million is available to help agricultural producers apply needed conservation practices on land throughout Minnesota. William Hunt, State Conservationist for NRCS in Minnesota, announced February 25, 2005 and March 25, 2005 as the end of the new signup periods for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program which will be held at all USDA Service Centers in Minnesota.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program, called EQIP, is a competitive and very popular program. Producers will receive up to 50 percent cost-share with certified Limited Resources Farmers receiving up to 90 percent cost share to implement conservation practices.

The EQIP signup period began on December 13, 2004. Applications will be scored and ranked based on a locally

prioritized statewide environmental ranking worksheet, high priority applications will be funded at the end of each of the sign up periods.

EQIP is a competitive program with the most cost-effective and environmentally beneficial projects selected for funding. To apply for funding, landowners should visit the NRCS office at the USDA Service Center in North Branch.

"Our focus with EQIP is to help producers with conservation on working agricultural land," said Hunt. "Implementing conservation practices on privately owned working land, which is 70 percent of the land base in this country, is the most effective thing we can do to protect our water quality and the health of our soil." EQIP also supports abundant wildlife habitat and productive grasslands and wood-

lands.

For more information on conservation practices and/or the statewide and county EQIP signup, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service at 38814 Third Avenue, North Branch, MN 55056 Phone: (651) 674-7160, or visit the



PREVENTING OAK WILT

Oak wilt is a fungal disease that causes wilting and eventually the death of oak trees. Trees are initially infected by sap-feeding beetles like the picnic beetle. Wounds created by storms or pruning serve as a feeding site for these beetles and as an entry point for the fungus. Once the tree has been infected, the fungus moves through grafted roots to healthy trees nearby. As the tree dies, the fungus reproduces. The fruity smell of fungal mats attracts picnic beetles, which carry fungal spores to fresh wounds.

To prevent infection, avoid pruning and wounding trees during April, May, and June when beetles are active. If trees are wounded during these months prevent beetles from interacting with fresh wounds by painting them. Apply a water-based (latex) paint or shellac within minutes. These materials act as a protective barrier; they do not help the tree recover.

Since the chance for infection still exists during July, August, September, and October, the optimum time for pruning trees is when they are dormant.

To manage existing infections, use a vibratory plow with a five-foot blade to sever below ground root grafts and remove infected trees. Infected trees should be destroyed or covered with heavy plastic through June the following year. The systemic fungicide Alamo has been used as a preventative treatment in highly valued red and white oaks, and as a curative treatment in white oaks.

For help with identifying, preventing and managing oak wilt infections contact the SWCD office at 651/674-2333. Financial assistance may be available.



Chisago Soil & Water Conservation District

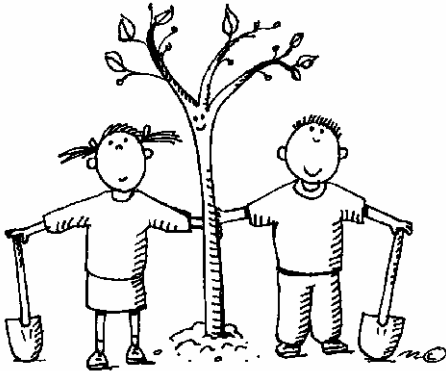
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2005 SPRING TREE & SHRUB
ORDER FORM ENCLOSED

POSTAL PATRON

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Knowledge is power. It only makes sense to teach the youth of today to protect the natural environment for future generations. The Chisago SWCD takes an active role in education. The opportunities listed here are available to everyone, from public and private schools to home schools.

ENVIROTHON – What is an Envirothon? An Envirothon is a competitive, outdoor, hands-on learning experience for students in grades 9-12. Teams consisting of 4-5 students (from the same school) will compete in the Envirothon. Students will visit six different learning stations covering aquatics, forestry, soil, wildlife, and a current environmental issue, which changes every year. Teams are given a brief presentation at 5 of the 6 stations, and are then asked 20 questions related to the topic. At the sixth station, teams are asked to give a 10 minute oral presentation on the current events topic. They are given the scenario before the actual event, so they may prepare visual aids and other props to assist their presentation.

The Envirothon deals with issues surrounding our valuable natural resources, stresses teamwork for success, and provides an opportunity to get involved in your own community and make a difference. This year's Envirothon will take place on Monday, May 2, 2005, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:40 p.m., at the Cloquet Forestry Center in Cloquet, MN.

POSTER, VIDEO & ESSAY CONTEST – "Trees...Rooted

in our Future" is the 2004-2005 statewide theme for the poster and video contest sponsored by the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) and the Chisago SWCD. The purpose of this contest is to give students an understanding of how to wisely use and replenish our forest resources. Eligible categories under the poster and video contest are as follows: Free Hand Poster 5th-6th Grade, Mural Contest 5th-6th Grade, Video Contest 5th-12th Grade.

The Chisago SWCD has opened the poster contest to students in grades K-4, as well as offering prizes for essays written by Chisago County students.

CHILDREN'S WATER FESTIVAL – Targeted towards 5th grade students throughout the county, this day provides a hands-on "out of the classroom" educational experience about water resources for students. Students and their teachers participate in outdoor/indoor, hands on, interactive learning stations about water resources in Chisago County. This one day event takes place in late September or early October. For more information contact Mary Schmitz, Local Water Resource Manager at 651/213-0270.

We invite you to contact our office if you have any questions about any of the programs please call 651-674-2333 and ask for Susan Humble.